

HANDHELDS

FAQ

Q I know that smartphones can display normal web pages, but most pages don't appear properly on such a small screen. Is there an easy way to find web pages formatted for a smartphone's lower-resolution display, or those that will work on a normal mobile phone?

A Although you need a smartphone to access normal websites, many major websites have special versions that are formatted specifically for mobile phones, and will even work on a non-smartphone. For example, you can find the mobile version of the BBC News website at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/mobile> and check your Hotmail account or chat using Messenger at <http://mobile.msn.com>.

The easiest way to find mobile-specific pages is to search for them using Google Mobile Web. Go to www.google.co.uk using your phone's browser and select the Mobile Web (Beta) option before you search. Google will now display only pages that work properly on your mobile.

Chris Finnamore
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RIM BlackBerry 8700g

★★★★★

From free to £320 depending on contract

With its vibrant colour screen and dedicated call answer and end buttons, RIM's new BlackBerry seems more like a high-tech mobile phone than a portable email device.

While its blue and silver finish still looks businesslike, the silver details show that RIM is trying to inject some style into its top-of-the-range handset. The new handset is slimmer and narrower than its predecessor, so it's also much easier to grip when you're using it as a phone.

The most striking aspect of the 8700g is its screen. While previous BlackBerry handsets had colour screens, the 8700g has a 65,000-colour, 360x240-pixel resolution display, offering far more colour and a higher resolution than previous BlackBerry models.

The traditional BlackBerry interface is still intact. You use the thumbwheel on the right of the handset to scroll through menu options and click to select. However, as this is the first BlackBerry with a full-sized keyboard to have dedicated call answer and end buttons, you no longer have to fiddle with the thumbwheel to answer calls or hang up. Call quality is also superb; despite being bulkier than most handsets, the 8700g works well as a phone.

Despite the flashy interface, the 8700g is still primarily a messaging device and it excels in this area. The handset uses push email to deliver messages, so you don't have to log into your mail server and periodically check for messages. Instead, they are delivered straight to the handset. The email client is logical and easy to use, and when you check your messages you have the option of reading each email a bit at a time to save time



downloading. Typing messages is fairly easy on the keyboard, although the handset's reduced width means the keys are more tightly spaced than on previous BlackBerries.

The email client also deals remarkably well with attachments.

The handset supports all the normal Windows image formats, as well as PowerPoint, Word, Excel and

PDF documents. Sadly, Word documents lose their formatting and the handset can display only the text of PowerPoint and PDF files, but Excel spreadsheets are displayed in a clear table format.

You can't use the BlackBerry to edit documents the way you can on a Windows Mobile PDA, though. The 8700g also has a built-in web browser, but it doesn't make such a good job of formatting pages to fit the screen as Pocket Internet Explorer.

The 8700g uses RIM's own connectivity software to connect to your PC, using either the supplied USB cable or Bluetooth. Connecting using Bluetooth is refreshingly easy provided you have Windows XP

Service Pack 2 installed and use Microsoft's own Bluetooth stack. The Desktop Manager software lets you back up and restore the device, load new applications or synchronise with Outlook, GroupWise or Lotus Notes.

RIM's BlackBerry 8700g is the best mobile-messaging device available, but it is very expensive compared to T-Mobile's Sidekick II and less versatile than a Windows Mobile smartphone PDA.

Chris Finnamore

SUMMARY

- ✓ Perfect for email
- ✓ Good attachment support
- ✗ Expensive

SMARTPHONE Quad-Band, 360x240 resolution LCD, 312MHz Intel PXA901 processor, 64MB memory, Bluetooth, BlackBerry 4 operating system
PART CODE 8700g
SUPPLIER www.carphonewarehouse.com
DETAILS www.blackberry.com

Also consider...

TOMTOM Navigator 5 Navigation Pack

★★★★★

£370 inc VAT



TomTom's navigation pack includes an HP iPAQ PDA, a Bluetooth GPS receiver and version 5 of TomTom's Navigator software. The kit is easy to set up; the software installs from the supplied SD card and is configured to pair with the Bluetooth receiver included. The software is easy to use, with voice prompts and a clear display. This is a great-value PDA and navigation device.



GPS NAVIGATION PACK GPS navigation kit, HP iPAQ hx2110 PDA, TomTom Bluetooth GPS receiver, TomTom Navigator 5 software, windscreen/dash-board mount. SUPPLIER www.mobilefun.co.uk
DETAILS www.tomtom.com Fast route calculation
Quiet speaker FULL REVIEW Feb 2006

ACER n300 400MHz

★★★★★

£291 inc VAT

Acer's n300 is the replacement for its previous high-end PDA, the n50. It's slimmer than the n50, has a higher-resolution 480x640 resolution screen and runs Windows Mobile 5. Connecting to the web is easy using the integrated 802.11b wireless networking and Bluetooth. It has 128MB of persistent memory to store programs and data. It's more expensive and not as powerful as Dell's Axim X51v, but it's slimmer, lighter and looks far better.



PDA Windows Mobile 5.0, 3.7" 480x640 LCD, 400MHz Samsung S3C2440 processor, 64MB RAM, 128MB storage (85MB available), Bluetooth, infrared, 802.11b WiFi, SD/MMC slot. PART CODE n300
SUPPLIER www.morecomputers.com DETAILS www.acer.co.uk
Slim and light; high-resolution screen Not quite as fast as Dell's Axim X51v FULL REVIEW May 2006

ORANGE SPV C600

★★★★★

Free on contract



The SPV C600 is the latest in Orange's SPV range of Windows Mobile-based smartphones and the first to run Windows Mobile 5. Although it shares its screen with the SPV C550 music phone, it isn't designed specifically as a music player, and has more in common with the SPV C500.

The SPV range's looks have improved with each generation, and although the latest handset is thicker than its predecessors, it has a sleek grey and silver finish and a less fussy keypad. The C500's rocking directional bar has been replaced by a joystick, which is arguably easier to use and better for gaming. Texting is harder than on the C500, as the phone's number keys are more tightly spaced, but their raised surface means those with bigger fingers can still use the phone.

The C600 shares the C550's 320x240-resolution screen and while it has only 65,000 colours compared to the 262,000 found on some smartphones, it is clear and bright. The screen is also large for the phone's size, and the high resolution means there is more room for web pages than on most smartphones. Viewing full-size web pages on a mobile's screen is always a compromise, but Pocket Internet Explorer makes a good job of displaying even graphics-heavy pages. The browser is significantly improved over the C500's version, as there is



a progress meter to show you how much of a web page has downloaded, and a zoom function as well.

There have also been changes to the phone's menu layout. Previous SPVs stayed close to the Windows Start Menu layout by giving a long list of options to choose from, but the C600's menu icons are arranged in a grid. This is more like a normal phone and clearer, as icons for each function are larger and easier to see.

One of the C600's main advantages is its ability to synchronise with Outlook. The SPV can synchronise with your PC's contacts and calendar using Bluetooth or USB, but as Windows Mobile 5 uses the TCP/IP networking protocol to communicate with your phone, you may have to fiddle with your personal firewall to get it working. Windows Mobile 5 supports persistent memory, so the SPV C600 doesn't lose any data if it runs out of battery power. The phone has 17MB of available storage and comes with a 32MB mini-SD card, so there is plenty of room for contacts and emails.

The SPV C600's camera has a 1.3-megapixel resolution compared to the C500's 0.3 megapixels. While the camera is an improvement, it is only good enough for viewing on your phone's screen, and not on a monitor, as it produces bleached-out colours.

This is only an incremental improvement over previous SPV phones, but the improvements over the SPV C500 are noticeable and turn an excellent phone into an even better one.

Chris Finnamore

SUMMARY

- ✓ Easy to use
- ✓ Improved software
- ✗ Unimpressive camera

SMARTPHONE 240x320 resolution LCD, 64MB RAM, 64MB storage (integrated) 32MB storage (mini-SD card), four hours talk time, six days standby, weighs 105g
PART CODE SPV C600
SUPPLIER Orange 08000 792000
DETAILS www.orange.co.uk

CHOOSING A... Smartphone

Follow the steps to find your ideal specs

STYLE: Handset
OS: Windows Mobile 5.0
SCREEN: 240x320; 65,536 colours
INPUT: Keypad
CAMERA: 640x480
BLUETOOTH: Yes
DATA CALLS: GPRS
Recommended minimum in grey

1 A smartphone's operating system – Palm OS, Windows Mobile or Symbian – dictates its basic features and what third-party software you can install. Windows Mobile 5.0 has the familiar look and feel of Windows, right down to a Start button, and is found on both handset- and PDA-style smartphones.

The only Palm OS smartphone available is Palm's Treo 650. There are four types of Symbian operating systems: series 60, 80, 90 and UIQ. Series 60, 80 and 90 are found on Nokia smartphones, while Sony Ericsson uses UIQ for its P900 smartphone series. Windows Mobile 5.0, Palm OS and Symbian all support third-party applications, and there is a vast amount of both freeware and commercial software available.

Unlike Windows Mobile 5.0 and Palm OS, Symbian can be customised by the phone's manufacturer and so may differ from phone to phone.

2 All smartphones come with a colour screen. A high-colour depth of 65,536 colours is important for viewing photos or video clips.

Typically users navigate and input information into a handset type of smartphone using the keypad and buttons or a jog dial. PDA-style smartphones usually have a touch screen, and both Pocket PC and Palm have handwriting recognition features as well as onscreen keyboards. A few have a built-in QWERTY keyboard.

3 Cameras are common in smartphones. Resolution is limited, with two megapixels and a fixed focus lens being the best you'll get. However, as most images will be viewed only onscreen or sent as a video message, this shouldn't be a problem for most people.

4 Bluetooth makes it easier to link your phone to a PC for synchronisation or wireless web access. For internet access, a GPRS or 3G mobile contract is essential. Data is billed per megabyte downloaded, but if you sign up for a data bundle when buying your smartphone it will work out cheaper.

SONY ERICSSON W800i

★★★★★

£230 inc VAT SIM-free; from free to £50 inc VAT on contract

This is a superb music player and phone in one. Transferring music to the phone is easy using the supplied software, and the music-playing application is excellent. Sound quality from the headphones is superb, and the autofocus camera is the best we have seen on a phone, especially at night.



MOBILE PHONE Music phone, tri-band, 400 hours standby, 540 minutes of talk time, Bluetooth/IR connectivity, radio, 512MB memory Stick Duo, 176x200 pixel display, 99g, 100x46x20.5mm (HWD) PART CODE W800 SUPPLIER www.expansys.com (SIM-free); Orange / O₂ (contract) DETAILS www.sonyericsson.co.uk ✓ Superb sound quality ✓ Stiff keypad buttons FULL REVIEW Dec 2005

DELL Axim X51v 624MHz

★★★★★

£325 inc VAT

Dell's Axim X51v is an update to the Axim X50v, previously the fastest handheld you could buy. The X51v shares the X50's powerful 624MHz processor and Intel 3D graphics, but it comes with Windows Mobile 5.

The X51v can connect to the internet using its built-in wireless networking or via a Bluetooth mobile phone. It also has persistent memory, so you won't lose your data if the PDA runs out of battery power. It is expensive, but no PDA is faster or has more features.



PDA Windows Mobile 5, 3.7" 480x640 LCD, 624MHz Intel XScale processor, 64MB RAM, 256MB storage (195MB available), Bluetooth, infrared, 802.11b, SD/MMC slot, CF slot PART CODE X51v SUPPLIER Dell 08709 075818 DETAILS www.dell.co.uk ✓ Powerful, with an excellent screen ✗ Expensive FULL REVIEW Apr 2006